

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 518.—VOL. X.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1893.

PRICE 1½d.

HAUNTED HOXTON.

A 'REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow' quarter of London is Hoxton, lying in the north-east between Old Street and Kingsland. To the majority of West End people but a geographical expression, about which they have, save for one thing, the haziest ideas—two only, in fact: one, that it is a place beloved by the 'coster' interest, and full of cabbage leaves; the other, that one of the finest theatres in London exists in it, the 'Britannia,' which, some thirty years ago, Charles Dickens, in his uncommercial travels, brought under the notice of readers in general. Thus much is known of Hoxton, and little more, save for the reason already mentioned, which is, that Mr Besant has laid one of the scenes of one of his most charming novels there, and has, with his usual accuracy, described the Hoxton of the present day in its habit as it lives.

What he has done we do not propose imperfectly to attempt, except to say that once a village lying outside London, it is now a densely crowded quarter, full of small industries, and tenement houses crammed with families, and much heart-rending squalor and poverty. Yet, passing down its main street, the eye constantly lights on fine old Jacobean and Georgian houses, red-tiled, dormer-windowed, with eaves and lofty attics; and once with ample gardens behind, now turned into yards, crammed with lumber, even as the stately houses have been subdivided into small shops, which represent all the needs of a densely populated, toiling neighbourhood.

Yet the Hoxton of to-day, fallen from its high estate, and weltering in mud and vegetable refuse, resonant with the bellowing of street vendors and the shrill chatter of innumerable work-girls, such as Mr Besant has limned in his 'Children of Gibbon' and others of his East End romances, is haunted by an array of shades, some, indeed, of high degree. Two centuries ago it was a charming rural village. It stood at the end of rustic Shoreditch and quiet Old Street, and ran northwards to the fields of Hoxton, which, beginning

by Kingsland Road, stretched right away to the village of Kingsland with its old houses and green. Those famous fields are now covered with streets, squares, 'roads,' and 'groves,' generally known as De Beauvoir Town, and thickly populated, and terminating at Ball's Pond Road, which runs at right angles to the main road north through Kingsland to Stamford Hill and Tottenham. But half a century ago a clear view of pasture and cornfields could be obtained, covering all the space between Kingsland Gate and Stamford Hill villadom.

We dwell thus on these Hoxton fields, and call them famous, for some of the most noted shades who haunt the once pretty village have traversed them. Across them—'to avoid the dust of the roads, and arrive at the Charter House'—came James I., what time he leisurely journeyed from the North to take possession of the throne of England. But a mightier and earlier crowned shade was before him. Henry VIII.—in veritable fact as well as phrase, 'most dread lord' to his subjects—visited, in all the pomp and splendour the Tudors loved, the fields of Hoxton and the village itself, the air resounding with fanfare of trumpet and deep-throated cheering, as the bluff despot watched the archers whom he so fostered contending at the butts; and from the quaint village houses a motley throng gathered to watch with awe their masterful sovereign, 'whose frown would have sent the proudest peer in England to the block.' The burlesque title of the Duke of Shoreditch was bestowed by the king on the Captain, and that of Marquis of Hoxton on the best archer of our historic village; and, by the way, the manor of Hoxton—or Hokestone—has been held by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's since a time earlier than the Norman Conquest. Thus 'the witty canon of St Paul's' may be said indirectly to be one of the shades which haunt the place.

Nor is James I. our only royal instance. His unhappy successor, when returning from his romantic love-journey to Spain, galloped with Buckingham, his ill-omened *fidus Achates*, across

the fields and down the village for the Bishop's Gate, passing through rural Shoreditch, where lately stood, amid the modern din and turmoil and showy shop architecture of the great thoroughfare of to-day, an Elizabethan-gabled timber house, which must have indeed witnessed many and marvellous vicissitudes in the centuries during which it remained unaltered amid constant metamorphoses. Hard by, in 'his house in Old Street—to which he retired,' curious as it sounds to those who know the incessant din and crowd of that now thickly populated centre of industry, as 'his favourite retreat from the gaiety and bustle of London'—dwelt the now almost forgotten author Samuel Daniel, who flourished in Elizabeth's reign, and wrote 'The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York,' and whom Drummond of Hawthornden pronounced in rhyming 'second to none.' He cultivated his gardens, and frequently strolled in the evenings into flower-encircled Hoxton, wandering along its long winding street as he composed his poems or his History, for he wrote one of England from the Conquest to Edward III. His style both in prose and verse has, like Dryden's, a most modern aspect; and he wrote some of the poetry for the court entertainments; but ultimately retired 'to a life of contemplation and quiet in the country' near Hoxton.

The village, detached as it was at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and surrounded on all sides by fields—and a century later flowers were gathered in Brick Lane, Spitalfields—was a favourite place of resort for the citizens of credit and renown. Like 'merry Islington,' it was famous for its cakes and ale, also for custards, as appears from allusions in the dramatists and other popular writers of the period. Hither, therefore, came many pleasure-seekers, and among them one of the most inveterate; for, as a modern essayist has shrewdly remarked, nothing is more perceptible in that candid self-portraiture, the Diary of Samuel Pepys, than his many-sided capacity for enjoyment. Pepys passed his childhood at Kingsland, and mentions how, when he was a man of good position, he revisited his ancient haunts, the fields where he shot with his bow and arrows; and, indeed, he frequently took coach along Shoreditch, and so northward. Frequently, too, no doubt, he strolled out of the city gates towards Hoxton, and with that appreciation of good things which we see in every page of his Diary, enjoyed the cakes, ale, and custards, the flower-gardens, and famous elm-trees—the Whitmore family, whose name yet marks several well-known places in the locality, had some magnificent specimens, which were blown down early in George III.'s reign—and the pretty faces that peeped from the flower-enwreathed lattices of the Hoxton cottages. Some of the cottages are there still, but, alas, how different in aspect!

And besides the figure of the loquacious Clerk to the Admiralty of Charles I., one can see with the mental eye various brilliant and roystering figures familiar enough at that monarch's free-and-easy court, who found much diversion in occasionally going so far from the fashionable purlieus of Whitehall as to Hoxton in its rural quiet, there to riotously enjoy its eates and 'syllabubs from the red cows' pasturing in the belt of fields; and also to flirt more or less riotously with the pretty

maidens, who in those days were abundant among the ancient cottages—and who have left some representatives yet in the now long unlovely street, albeit, poor things! their faces are hunger-pinched and toilworn.

Perhaps, however, the shade which haunts Hoxton, of all others the most interesting to every student of English literature, though his name be unfamiliar to most of its present inhabitants, is one whose bodily presentment was often there some seventy or eighty years ago. 'A spare figure in clerly black,' with a melancholy smile, and keen, gentle humorous eyes, seems to flit before us as we pass down the lower end of the long street where still stands Hoxton House, ancient, indeed, in some of its buildings, and for so long a series of years a lunatic asylum. For thither, too, often across the Hoxton fields, now covered with houses, came Charles and Mary Lamb, both weeping as acquaintances have met them, and on their way, poor souls! to the asylum, whither they always went when Mary Lamb—to whom her gifted brother so nobly and unostentatiously devoted his life—felt one of her periodical fits of insanity approaching. Hither, from distant Shacklewell, where Lamb loved to lodge when desiring repose, and which with its ancient green is in great part unaltered as when he wrote some of his *Essays*, overlooking it the affectionate and sad pair, would journey—perhaps the most pathetic shades in Haunted Hoxton.

POMONA.*

By the Author of *Laddie, Tip Cat, Lil, &c.*

CHAPTER XIX.

For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

SHAKESPEARE.

'It is not a very good day with mother,' Pomona said, half an hour later, coming into the morning-room, where Sage had been luxuriously waiting in a deep armchair, in which each slight turn of the head brought some fresh beauty into view: the open window and through it the broad lawn, sloping away into thickets of rhododendrons, and beyond that, the park, and a glimpse of bright water through the great trees, and beyond it all, blue distance; or the conservatory, into which another window led, full of richest hues and sweetest fragrance; or the room itself, with pictures and statuary, books and music and flowers everywhere; or even the little table close at hand with its tempting array of scarlet strawberries, iced lemonade, and dainty cakes.

Pomona was looking wistful and sad, for even the separation of a few days was enough to show an alteration in her mother; or, perhaps, as she tried to persuade herself, she had forgotten a little of the weakness and transparent fragility which struck such a pang to her heart now.

'The weather has been trying lately,' Pomona went on with an almost pleading tone in her voice, insisting on finding any reason but the

* Copyright reserved in the United States of America.

real and obvious one; and she went for rather too long a walk last week. And she has been so looking forward to to-day, and trying to be so well and bright, for my sake, that she has got nervous, and could not sleep just because she was so anxious to be at her best. Martin—that is her maid, you know, who was with her before I was born—says she is wonderfully nervous. Just fancy, Sage, Martin asked me not to talk about Mr Ludlow's picture and its likeness to me. She says that what I said in one of my letters about it seemed quite to worry mother. It is so unlike her, Sage—she used not to be a bit fanciful. She wants to see you presently after lunch; and I told her I was sure you would not mind being left a little to your own devices, as you would quite understand that I should want to be with her on my birthday; and she is so easily overtired if there is more than one in her room.'

Sage was able truthfully to declare that she would not mind if she were left all day to her own devices; and she entreated Pomona to do exactly as she would if she were alone.

'You don't know,' she said, 'how beautiful and new it all is to me. I was only thinking, before you came down, that I could be quite contented to sit here all day and never move.'

'But I shan't let you do that, you dear, little soul. Fancy coming to Beechfield and never moving out of the morning-room! Even if I should allow it, mother wouldn't. She would get right up off her sofa, I believe, and come down to see that you got proper treatment in your own mother's old home. It is yours as well as mine, Sage, so you must feel proud of it too. I will turn on Mrs Stone, the housekeeper, to show you the family pictures, unless you would rather prow about by yourself. She is a dreadful old bore, there is no denying; she has all the names and dates and painters at the tip of her tongue, and reels them off to the people who come to see the house on the days when it is shown to the public. I used to think her wonderfully clever, when I was a child, to remember it all; but I soon found out that it was just learned off by rote, and that she could not answer any question the least off the beaten track; and that if she got at all put out, or lost the proper succession, she floundered hopelessly, and had to begin all over again. And for my part, I much prefer to invent the histories for myself, and I endowed all those old Lesters with such romantic stories, ever so much more real to me than Mrs Stone's dull, little, historical facts. The advantage I had over her was that I could ignore the unities of time, and bring young hearts together that centuries had divided; and there was no table of kindred and affinity in my world, for I think I frequently allowed a man to marry his pretty, young grandmother.—But I think you ought to be introduced properly to your relations, Sage; and it will gratify poor old Stone so much to do it, that you will have to sacrifice yourself. But come along into the garden, and I want you to see the stables and my dogs before lunch.'

Sage was well content, as she said, to be left

to amuse herself, and to explore the house and gardens and out into the shady glades of the park. She submitted gladly to Mrs Stone's guidance through the picture-gallery; the historical facts that had seemed so dry to Pomona were deeply interesting to Sage, who never till to-day had felt that she had any connection with the events of which she had laboriously mastered the particulars at school. It gave her a little thrill to reflect that an ancestor of hers had raised a troop for King Charles; that another had been attainted of high-treason and had his lands confiscated; that this in stiff ruff and long, pointed, jewelled stomacher had been one of Elizabeth's ladies; and the other—in whose somewhat sensual face Mrs Stone traced a likeness to Sage—had been a court beauty in Charles II.'s time. It seemed to give a reality to history, to fetch it out of the dog-eared covers of school-books, and set it moving and feeling and breathing before her. And it gave life to people who had been hitherto only names attached to pictures in the National Gallery, not meaning much more than the numbers. Van Dyck, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough were real painters like Mr Ludlow, to whom ancestors and ancestresses of hers had sat, just as she and Kitty had sat at Scar.

She looked with respect at the bed in which Queen Elizabeth slept. Did ever queen sleep in more four-posters than good Queen Bess? Future ages will not have a quarter the number to display as the resting-place of Queen Victoria, even if future ages have a quarter of the respectful interest that lingers, even in this radical age, in the uneasy resting-place of a head that wears a crown. She would have liked to have heard a great deal more about some of the relics: the handkerchief that belonged to Marie-Antoinette, the pearl-embroidered glove of Lady Jane Grey, the snuff-box given by Napoleon, &c.; only, she remembered Pomona's warning that vexatious questions annoyed the kind, old housekeeper, who appeared to her a very grand and dignified person, quite justified in the patronising tone she assumed.

She was called away from her examination of these treasures to her interview with Lady Lester. In after-days, looking back on this her only interview with her aunt, she always connected it in her mind with the deer in the park: perhaps it was the great, pathetic, dark eyes that looked so unnaturally large in the pale, wan face; perhaps it was the shadowy, fragile grace; perhaps it was the sense of speedy passing away which impressed her in this still, quiet room, as it had when the dappled herd flitted across the glade out of the shadow, across the sunshine, into the shadow again.

'Here is Sage, dearest,' Pomona said, rising from her low seat by her mother's sofa. 'Now I am going to spare you to her for ten minutes, which I think is very generous of me; and at the end of that time I shall come and turn her out ruthlessly.'

And then Pomona left them together.

'Let me look at you, my dear,' the faint voice said. 'Come and sit down where Mona was.—Yes; you are very like the Lesters, as she said.'

'Father always says I am like my mother.'

'I hardly remember her enough to say, but you are like the old portraits.'

'Pomona is not like them.'

'No.' Lady Lester's eyes closed; and Sage felt that her voice, with the greatest care to soften it, was still rough enough almost to scare the delicate life away; but Lady Lester began speaking again eagerly and hurriedly.

'I wanted very much to see you to ask you to forgive me.'

'What for?'

'For a great wrong.'

'I do not understand,' Sage said. She wished Pomona would come back; she had heard of people in great weakness getting wrong in their heads; and Lady Lester's eyes were bright and burning, and the thin hand that held Sage's grasped it with an almost painful pressure.

'No; how could you understand? Tell me, dear, have you been very poor?'

Sage's hand gave a little, proud start, as if to draw itself away from the detaining clasp.

'You must not be offended. I have so little time to put what I want to say into polite words. Mona will be back directly; and besides—do not tell her—I have not long to live, and may not see you again.'

'I have been very happy,' Sage said. 'I have the kindest, best father in the world, and a most happy home.'

'Yes; that is just what I want to know, that you are happy.'

There was something in the great burning eyes that seemed to draw out from Sage a hint of that greater happiness that had come to her of late, and she went on, with the colour mounting to her cheeks: 'I think sometimes I am the happiest girl in the world.'

'That is right. And you would not change places with any other?'

'Not for worlds.'

'Not with Mona?'

'Not with any one.'

'Am I right, little Sage, in thinking there is some other reason for the happiness? You can't be expected to tell a stranger all about it, though that stranger is an aunt; but I think you would if you knew what a weight it lifts off my conscience to think that what I have done has in no way affected your life's happiness.'

She drew the girl's flushing face towards her with her two soft hands and looked straight into the shy, gray eyes.

'Is he very nice, little Sage, very tender, very true, that for his sake you would not change with Mona or any girl in the world?—God bless you, dear! I shall sleep quieter with the feeling that I have not hurt you.—There is Mona coming—kiss me, and say you forgive me.'

'Indeed, indeed, there is nothing to forgive.'

'Why, mother, I declare you look ever so much brighter and better! I shall be quite jealous of this sly, little, quiet Sage if she can charm away your headache better than I can.'

But the transient life that the excitement of her conversation had imparted soon died away, and such prostration followed that Martin had to be summoned; and the two girls reluctantly left her, Martin promising to call Pomona directly her mother was sufficiently restored for her to return.

The two girls were lingering in the gallery that ran round the large central hall, when the

sound of a carriage at the front door made them draw back.

'Some one come to call,' Pomona said. 'I really can't see them. I think one has a right to do as one likes on one's birthday.'

Presently a silent-footed servant came up the stairs with some cards on a salver, and presented them to Pomona, who glanced at them carelessly.

'I said I thought you were engaged, Miss, as her ladyship was not very well,' the man said.

Pomona had taken up one of the cards and was looking at it hesitatingly. 'How did they know I was down?'

'They came to inquire for her ladyship, and asked when you were expected; so I said you were down for the day, Miss.'

Pomona looked round towards her mother's room.

'Martin promised to call me,' she said doubtfully, 'when mother was a little better. I should not like to miss a minute that I could be with her; but'—And then she looked at the card again uncertainly for a moment, ending, however, by tossing it back on to the salver, saying: 'Yes; say I am only down for a few hours, and I cannot leave Lady Lester.' And then she turned to a large window in the gallery that commanded a view of part of the drive up to the house, and stood there for a few minutes, after the closing of the door and the sound of wheels on the gravel announced that the callers had left.

Sage's artistic eye was struck by the exquisitely graceful picture she made, leaning on the oak window-ledge, with one hand holding back the heavy velvet curtain, and above her the rich colouring of old glass emblazoned with the Lester arms; and beyond, through the open casement, the broad sweep of park and the blue distance. Was it the sun through the crimson glass that cast a sudden flush on the milk-white neck as the sound of wheels died away?

'I wonder,' Sage thought to herself, 'if that caller was any one she cares for? It was a gentleman's card.'

And then a wave of sympathy swept over her, fancying how she would have felt if it had been Maurice driving away; and perhaps her eyes were a little too sympathetic when they met Pomona's, for she turned away with a half-proud, half-shy look, as if the blossom of her confidence was not sufficiently blown to allow of a gaze into its heart.

'I will go and see how mother is,' she said; and then, with a touch of compunction, she put her arm round Sage and kissed her. 'Poor, dear, little Sage. I am treating you very badly, leaving you so much to yourself.'

'Indeed, indeed, Pomona, I do not mind. I could not bear you to stop away from Lady Lester on my account.'

And then Sage went down the great stairs alone, still wondering if Pomona had any one like Maurice, and if that were he who drove away just now.

On the old carved oak table in the hall was the silver salver with the cards lying on it, one of them face downwards, as Pomona had tossed it; and Sage stood for a moment looking at it, figuring to herself what Pomona's lover should

be like, how handsome, noble, splendid; and then, hardly thinking what she was doing, or if the curiosity was justifiable, she turned the card over to see the name. It was 'Mr Maurice Moore.'

THE PROPOSED NAVAL INSURANCE FUND.

By CHARLES GLEIG.

THE loss of the battleship 'Victoria,' and the circumstances attending that terrible disaster, are still fresh in the public mind. It may be truly said that in every British home the deepest sympathy was felt for the widows and children of the brave fellows who met death so steadfastly on the 22d of June. The appeal of the Lord Mayor of London on behalf of the dependent relatives was so generously responded to in all parts of the kingdom, and even in the colonies, that within two months the Victoria Relief Fund was swelled to seventy-two thousand pounds, this being by far the greatest fund ever subscribed under similar circumstances. The Fund has since been entrusted to the management of the Royal Patriotic Commission, of which His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge is President; and as soon as the necessary inquiries and formalities have been concluded, the widows, orphans, and other dependent relatives will begin to receive small weekly pensions from the Fund thus generously subscribed by the public. As we write, more than three months have elapsed since the sinking of the 'Victoria,' but as yet the Patriotic Commissioners have not been able to issue those weekly pensions. This delay has led to very strong comments in the press and at the naval ports; but it would be outside the scope of the present paper to discuss that question, and we merely allude to the delay that has occurred in support of the contention that the time has arrived when a General Naval Insurance Fund ought surely to be formed.

This project has already been widely discussed at the naval ports, and there is every indication that the petty officers and men of the fleet are desirous of ensuring provision for their families in such a manner as to obviate the necessity of periodically appealing to the public for charity. Such an excellent scheme as this deserves the support of public men, members of Parliament, and even, perhaps, of the Government itself; for every one must admit that the system of relying upon public charity for the support of widows and orphans of men of the royal navy is altogether wrong in principle. It is not that the public grudge the money—this has been clearly exemplified by the loss of the 'Victoria'—but the seamen themselves are earnestly desirous of securing more definite provision for their families; and, for reasons we will endeavour to explain, the establishment of a General Insurance Fund would almost certainly render the naval service more attractive to the rank and file.

Under the present system, or rather lack of system, the widows and children of petty officers and men who lose their lives in the service of the Crown are only entitled to pensions under certain conditions. These pensions, as we shall show, are very small, and, but for the charity

of the public, would be altogether inadequate. Under the second section of the Act 46 and 47 Victoria, the Admiralty are empowered to grant these small weekly pensions to the widows and young children of men who have been killed or drowned on duty, or whose deaths have resulted, within twelve months, from injuries or disease directly due to the service. The regulation is so framed as to greatly restrict the award of these pensions, notwithstanding that the money comes out of the Greenwich Hospital Fund, and not out of the pockets of the taxpayers. It has to be proved to the satisfaction of the Admiralty that a man has met his death actually on duty, or else the widow gets nothing. Thus—to take a very common example—a seaman may be drowned by the capsizing of a waterman's boat, when returning to his ship from leave. In such a case the widow receives no pension. Or, again, a seaman may be robbed and murdered whilst ashore in some semi-civilised country, and here again the widow would be thrown upon the world. This regulation may or may not be regarded as harsh; but in any case the remedy for this state of affairs will never be found in Admiralty circulars, for what is required is obviously a General Insurance Fund upon which all naval men's widows should have a legal and indisputable claim.

But to return for a moment to the existing rules. These Greenwich pensions, granted under fixed regulations, vary in amount from three shillings and sixpence to six shillings and sixpence a week; the widows of seamen, stokers, or marines being entitled to the lowest scale, whilst the widows of petty officers may receive the higher rates. Small allowances are also made to each child, never exceeding two shillings a week; but these cease in the case of boys at fourteen and of girls at sixteen years of age. From these figures it will be observed that the widow of an able seaman left with, say, three young children on her hands would receive a pension of not more than nine shillings and sixpence a week. It has always been necessary on this account to appeal to the charitable instincts of the British public whenever any of Her Majesty's ships have been lost, or even when serious accidents have occurred afloat, such as the bursting of the turret gun on board Her Majesty's ship 'Thunderer.' By this means poor Jack's dependent relatives have been preserved from absolute want; but the system is discreditable to a great maritime nation, and humiliating to the feelings of our seamen.

But there is another point which cannot be passed over in silence, and which in itself affords a strong argument in favour of the proposed scheme of naval insurance. The public is accustomed to subscribe towards the relief of the widows and children in all cases of actual disaster on a large scale, such as the loss of a ship, serious gun accidents, and so forth; but the public is not expected, nor can it be asked, to relieve individual cases of distress, such as those to which we have already alluded. Take the case of a seaman who is killed by falling from aloft, for example. His widow receives the Greenwich pension of three shillings and sixpence a week, and the officers and men of the ship invariably raise a subscription for her benefit;

but here the matter ends, although, of course, the unfortunate woman thus thrown upon the world deserves to be helped just as much as if her husband's life had been sacrificed under more sensational circumstances. Perhaps we have now sufficiently explained the desirability of establishing a system of naval insurance, and may proceed to consider some of the schemes under discussion in the naval ports.

The proposed formation of a General Naval Disaster Fund is not altogether a new project. The Naval Exhibition of 1891 was organised by a Committee of officers with the object of benefiting naval charities; and, thanks to the support of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the undertaking proved very successful. After paying all expenses, the Committee of the Naval Exhibition were able to declare a surplus of £47,246, 6s. 9d., and with this money it was decided to establish a new charity, known as the Royal Naval Fund. The Queen was graciously pleased to become patron of this Society, or Committee of management; the Prince of Wales was appointed President; and it was hoped that the problem of how to make adequate provision for the widows and dependent relatives of men who lost their lives in the navy would at length have been satisfactorily solved. Unfortunately, and in spite of royal patronage and support, this scheme has hitherto failed. It is scarcely necessary to explain that the interest of the capital produced by the Exhibition was in itself far too small to enable the Committee to carry out their scheme. It was confidently anticipated, however—by officers out of touch with the views of the lower deck—that there would be no difficulty in inducing the petty officers and men of the navy to support the scheme. The men were asked to assist in the project by paying one shilling a head per annum; and not a little astonishment was evinced in official circles when, after mature consideration, the men unanimously declined to have anything to do with the scheme. In making this decision, the men of the lower deck were well advised, as we will endeavour to show. The Committee of the Exhibition Fund had vested the administration of the surplus in trustees, who were bound down to apply it in relieving the widows and dependent relatives of men who actually lost their lives in the service, and the men's voluntary contributions would have been expended similarly. The scheme was a good one in many respects; but the men held, and, as we think, rightly, that the principle of excluding the naval pensioners' widows was open to grave objections. If they had accepted the scheme, there can be little doubt we might have had to wait many years for a really extensive and business-like scheme of naval insurance; whereas, now, there is every prospect of this important question being shortly settled on a much wider basis. In order to make this point clearer to civilians, we should remind our readers that although the widow of a commissioned officer is entitled to a small pension under any circumstances—unless, indeed, she is possessed of considerable private means—the widow of a naval pensioner is considered to have no claim whatever upon the State, and has very frequently to end her days in the workhouse. The men therefore determined to have nothing to do with a scheme framed solely

in the interests of those actually serving afloat. They favoured a much wider scheme.

Now, the loss of the 'Victoria' following so closely upon the wreck of the 'Serpent' has had a very marked effect upon the minds of naval men. The idea of establishing an Insurance scheme was no doubt revived by the Committee of the Exhibition Fund; but the failure of that project damped the ardour of the officers, and for a time it seemed as though the men were inclined to let the whole question drop. But the 'Victoria' disaster has naturally aroused the men; and though the public has subscribed most generously towards the relief of the widows, the loss of so many lives has again directed their attention to the necessity of establishing an extensive scheme of Insurance. There is no longer room for doubt that the men of the lower deck are anxious to help themselves in this matter, and that they are willing to devote a small proportion of their earnings to insuring their lives; but at the same time they are not disposed to give more than a few shillings a year individually, and consequently the scheme cannot be carried out except with official aid. Miss Agnes Weston, 'The Sailor's Friend,' whose name is familiar to most people, has suggested in letters to the press that the Government should advance, without charging interest, a sum of three hundred thousand pounds. The suggestion is startling, but not unreasonable, for Miss Weston points out that there would be no great difficulty in repaying the money after an interval of about forty years. It is a large sum of money to advance, yet it is after all little more than the price of a cruiser, and, moreover, it could be ultimately repaid to the State if properly managed. If any such project should meet with the approval and support of the authorities, the men will be willing to subscribe a shilling a head per month; and it is estimated that those united subscriptions would amount to about forty thousand pounds per annum. Then, again, if the naval pensioners are included in the scheme, and allowed to share in the benefits, the annual subscription would, of course, be very largely augmented.

Another very practical scheme has been suggested by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Symonds, a distinguished officer, who periodically endeavours to persuade the Government of the day to increase the strength of the navy, and whose name should also be familiar to the public. Sir T. Symonds has pointed out that the Admiralty have long been making a clear profit of more than twenty-five thousand pounds per annum on the victualling of the fleet, and the gallant officer holds that this surplus should be utilised for the benefit of the men. It is so perfectly certain that this saving will be effected, that the victualling vote is correspondingly reduced before being submitted to Parliament. Many will no-doubt agree that the country could well afford to dispense with this economy; and if the Government should be willing to pay this annual surplus into a Naval Insurance Fund, the necessary balance could readily be made up by the men's subscriptions.

Still another project has been widely discussed at the home ports, which is greatly favoured by the seamen. The Commissioners of the Patriotic

Fund still have control of the numerous funds subscribed by the public for the relief of widows of seamen. None of the funds have been materially reduced, because the Commissioners have wisely expended only the interest, so that in course of time, as death gradually settles all claims, the Commissioners will find themselves possessed of a large surplus. This money will, of course, have to be utilised for the benefit of the navy, and it is suggested that the time has arrived when the various surpluses might be amalgamated, and devoted to forming the nucleus of the proposed Insurance Fund. No doubt, if the money can be spared for this purpose, the Commissioners should consider the project; but the amount of money at their disposal would not of itself go very far. Of the 'Captain' Relief Fund, £31,534 remains; of the 'Eurydice' Fund, £14,472; and of the 'Atalanta' Fund, £7500. Lieutenant-colonel Young, Secretary to the Patriotic Commission, has recently stated, however, that it is proposed to devote any surplus of the 'Victoria' Fund to forming the nucleus of a General Disaster Fund, and it is not improbable that the trustees of the Naval Exhibition Fund may be induced to lend their support to this project.

It must be remembered, however, that those Naval Funds are carefully safeguarded by deeds of trust, and that there may be difficulties in the way of the trustees which would prevent the proposed amalgamation of surpluses for several years to come. Meanwhile, there is the danger of present inaction to be considered. At the present moment the men of the fleet are keenly alive to the desirability of forming a Naval Insurance Fund, and there would be no difficulty in persuading them to submit to a small compulsory levy on their pay. If the Admiralty will bestir themselves in this matter, the result is not doubtful; otherwise, it is much to be feared that the Naval Insurance scheme may remain in dreamland for years to come.

LESS THAN KIN.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

By MRS WILL C. HAWKSEY.

CHAPTER I.

It was a pretty cottage, that at which the dingy cab, engaged at Havant Station, drew up one wet June evening. Pretty, notwithstanding the weather which caused the roses, climbing up the front and peeping in at the windows, to nod their moist, bedraggled heads, and which weighted with damp the vine-leaves overshadowing the porch. Yet, in spite of its rural beauty, that it would be an empty dwelling in a very few hours was evident, for the curtainless casements looked bare and wretched, bits of straw displayed their ungainly length against the dark mould of the flower-beds and upon the yellow gravel of the sodden path; whilst over everything was written, as plainly to be read as the two short words upon the board by the gate, 'To Let.'

'I'm glad we had the covered vans, though they are so much more expensive,' remarked Mildred Russell to her husband as she flattened

her nose—a well-shaped nose enough under more favourable circumstances—against the panes and stared out into the twilight. 'Every atom of furniture would have been ruined otherwise.'

'My dearest Milly, all your arrangements are wise!' declared the clergyman behind her. 'Fancy arriving at Denleigh with never a dry chair to offer the expectant parishioner. Avaunt the notion!'

'You're a goose. You'll have to improve, now that you're a Vicar, really, Charlie. Oh, you must! And treat me with the dignity becoming my position too. Just promise to try, will you?'

'Promise? I'll promise anything!' At which his wife laughed, understanding that reply of old. 'There's a knock at the street door now, and a fine opportunity to begin my career of respect.—No; you don't,' as she showed signs of herself answering the summons. 'In the absence of the domestic, such menial offices naturally devolve upon the obedient husband. Permit me, madam!' With another peal of the merriest laughter, Mrs Russell sank upon the chair he was offering.

'How nice! And what a change,' she remarked, looking saucily up into his face. 'But really, if you *are* going to act butler!'

He was already in the hall, threading a careful path between the packages that encumbered the house entrance. In another instant his wife heard the sound of the turning handle, and of his voice offering an astonished greeting. 'My dear Jack! What on earth brings you here? And to-night. Come in out of the wet—do! Give me your goods.'

Mildred was beside him by this time. Having caught the first three syllables, she had waited in state no longer. 'Oh, Mr Daintry, how delightful of you! We were just wanting somebody to cheer us up—weren't we, Charlie?' with her pretty smile. 'Take care, you clumsy creature. You'll drop— Why, it's a baby!' For a little startled cry suddenly proceeded from the rolled-up bundle, which Charlie, believing it to contain nothing but shawls and rugs, had unceremoniously tucked under his arm, and now, in his astonishment, must inevitably have dropped, had not Milly's hands closed upon it.

Without a thought of anything but the child, who was beginning to scream loudly, the lady turned abruptly and led the way into the sitting-room. At least there was a chair there, if only the oldest of kitchen properties, upon which she could deposit herself and investigate her burden. Which she immediately proceeded to do, ultimately bringing to light a tiny creature, with the reddest of red faces, and the smallest of clenched fists, with which latter it beat wildly at the air, violently yelling the whole time. Mildred caught it closely to her breast and looked up, with a world of inquiry in her gaze, at her guest, who by this time had entered, followed by the wondering cleric.

'That's the way she's been going on all day,' Jack Daintry exclaimed, despairingly.—'Oh, Mrs Russell, I can't bear it—I can't bear it! Quiet her, if you can—do. My poor wee girl.' And he stooped to kiss the smooth head, that was jogging itself up and down furiously upon Mildred's shoulder. When he raised himself, she

saw that great drops, not attributable to the rain, were in his eyes.

'The child's hungry, I believe. When was she fed last?' going straight, as was her wont, to the practical side of the matter.

'This morning. Before we started from London, I suppose. At least—I— Oh, how shall I make you understand?' With which final exclamation he suddenly sank upon his knees by the rickety table, and bowing his head upon the hard wood, burst into sobs. Mildred and her husband exchanged glances.

'Here, Charlie, take her for a moment; I'll get what she wants,' cried Milly, though a great lump had risen in her throat, and she felt more inclined to join her tears with Jack's than to do anything more useful. That, however did not hinder her quick movements, which in five minutes resulted in producing a baby's feeding-bottle, filled with warm milk and water, upon which the half-famished infant at once set to work, giving vent the while to little gurgles of satisfaction.

'Wasn't it lucky I had kept our Dick's bottle to give to Mrs Jones for Mary?' Mildred remarked, as she held one soft hand in her own, and watched the stormy face subside into peaceful sleepiness.—'But, Charlie, I expect Mr Dainty is hungry too. Do go and fetch the cold meat. It's on the top shelf of the cupboard, and so is the solitary loaf we possess. As to knives and forks, you must rummage for them. Such are the exigencies of a move,' turning to the visitor, who had by this time dried his eyes, with a sort of tired pathetic movement that touched the spectators more than any words. 'He's in awful trouble, whatever it may be,' was the thought in Mrs Russell's mind.

The supper arrived by-and-by; and although at the first sight of food Jack shrank back with a half-shudder, the refreshment did him good when he began to eat. Gradually the nervous quivering about his delicately cut mouth ceased, and the miserable heaving of his chest grew less noticeable. When at length he pushed away his plate and turned to the fire, he certainly seemed revived.

'You're worn out, old fellow,' exclaimed Charlie, with ready sympathy.

'Nearly'—pressing his fingers to his forehead. 'But how good you've been,' stretching out the other hand—a very weak, womanish hand it looked—and laying it upon Charlie's far more healthy member. 'You always were better than anybody else.'

'Oh, always!'—with a laugh, that for once was not the reflex of his feelings. 'And now, who is this young person?'—pointing to the child upon his wife's knee.

'My own daughter'—with an air half sorrowful, half proud. 'Ah, Charlie, you didn't know I was married?'

'No, indeed. How should I? when you haven't written for'—

'Two years,' finished Mildred, as he paused. 'I remember, if you don't! You see, I consider my husband's friends are my friends too, Mr Dainty.'

'I know,' answering her smile with another, sadder than tears. 'But let me tell you my story.

It won't be a long one, for I'm too fagged myself to want to weary you.'

'No fear of that,' from Charlie. But the other did not heed the interruption.

'I married—her a year ago. She was my landlady's daughter,' he began, in short, jerky sentences. 'Whilst I was studying in London I had rooms in her mother's house, and so made her acquaintance. Afterwards, Mrs Dawson died, and she was left quite alone. So my twenty-first birthday was also our wedding-day. She was the sweetest, daintiest creature. And she died just a fortnight ago, when this little one was born.—Mrs Russell, she was starved to death!' He drew a deep breath, as of a creature in physical agony. Then, as no one spoke—for what was there to say in reply to such an awful statement as that?—he went on again.

'We were married without my father's knowledge. But it came to his ears, and he stopped my allowance then and there. That was within a month of the wedding. I went and pleaded with him. He listened and laughed; and I flung out of the house in anger. But worse times came. We pawned—her—wedding ring to get enough money for our railway fares, and went again—together! But he would not so much as see us. We never redeemed that ring.'

Once more he stopped. Mildred's tears were falling fast upon the white dress of the motherless baby, and Charlie was shading his eyes with his hand. But now, whilst he recurred in memory to the deepest depths of his misery, Jack's own eyes, which overflowed so freely half an hour ago, were dry.

'When she was dying, I went again to Rushton, spending my last penny. I had better have saved it to buy food for—her,' with the pause he invariably made before each reference to his dead wife. 'I did see Sir George then. I told him that she was perishing from actual want. And he answered that it was what he wished. To get rid of her was the best he could do for me. After that, can I give him my little Ena?'

There was no determination in his tone, only the sad depression that had characterised his manner ever since he entered, and that told of the crushing torture of mind and body through which he must have passed. Charles Russell, remembering him as he used to be, weak but high-spirited, passionate but affectionate, could scarcely believe this to be his father's old pupil and favourite, who at one time had been to himself more than most younger brothers are. But it was not he who first replied to the pathetic appeal.

'Give him this baby? Ena, too! What a pretty name!'

'It was her mother's. Her people had been yeomen-farmers, and could trace their pedigree back to Saxon times. Longer than I can follow my own,' from Jack, with a melancholy smile.

'Really? But of course Sir George cannot have her. Why,' very hotly, 'he might teach her to despise her own mother, which would be dreadful! You'll keep her yourself, Mr Dainty. I can tell you a lot about babies, because there's our small Dick, you remember. Oh, she'll be such a companion'—

But he interrupted her. 'I can't bear my life here,' he said. 'I've no resources either, because

I'd rather die, and so follow—her, than go, on my own behalf, to my father, after'—

Mildred nodded a full comprehension of the muttered words.

'He has my eldest brother and his boys to console him. Duke will never transgress in the way I did'—with a slight curl of his lips. 'As to work, there's none to be had in England; or if there is, I can't find it. But an old friend, whom I knocked against yesterday— You remember Dolby, Russell?'

'Oh yes.'

'Well, he offered me a ticket for the States. He's been in low-water too, and had actually booked his passage out, when he came in for a legacy. And as he had some notion, I suppose, that I was hard up, he gave me the chance of this windfall. The ship starts to-morrow.'

There was a silence when he paused. Of course the husband and wife guessed, more or less, of the request which was to be made, and were already meditating upon the matter. They were not rich by any means, in spite of the living to which the clergyman had just been appointed, the revenues of which were, indeed, barely two hundred a year. And they had themselves a five-year old toddler for whom to provide. Yet all Mildred's womanly heart had gone out to the infant whose little fingers were in her own warm grasp, and whose deep breathing, still broken by an occasional sob, alone disturbed the stillness; whilst Mr Russell was endeavouring to find an excuse for his own desire to have another prattler about the house in the consideration of the benefit that Dick might derive from such society. By the time that Jack found courage to give voice to his wishes, there was small danger that he would be met with a refusal.

'Mrs Russell, will you take her and bring her up as your own? Don't let any one know that she has no mother. In you she'll find one, poor little soul. And if she never hears the truth, she cannot feel desolate.'

Mildred had believed herself prepared for anything; but she opened her eyes at that. 'But you'll be coming back and wanting her by-and-by,' she urged.

'Then I am sure that you won't dispute my claim,' with another of those dreadfully mirthless smiles. 'But I don't believe that I shall ever ask you to give her up. It is possible. But I have a presentiment'—

'Bosh!' from Charles. 'You always were as superstitious as you were high, and that's saying a good deal.'

'Well, presentiments sometimes come true, at any rate. And if mine should, will you keep the child?'

The eyes of husband and wife met, making inquiry each of the other, as usual. True, that these two had been married for six long years of sunshine and shadow, but they were still lovers as fond—nay, much fonder—than when they plighted their troth. And they had not lost the lover's faculty of thought-reading.

'There must positively be one condition, then: her grandfather must be acquainted with the child's whereabouts. You can draw up a will, leaving her guardianship to me, in case of your own death. But, in fairness to everybody, Sir George Daintry must be told.'

And so it was settled. Using such legal knowledge as his never arduous studies had acquired for him, John Daintry bequeathed his one treasure to his friend, and wrote a brief note to his father before he quitted the house. Then, silently grasping Mildred's hand, and kissing the brow of the slumbering Ena, he took his voiceless farewell—for ever, in this world; for the ship that sailed with him on board arrived at New York with one short in the complement of her passengers. During a gale, encountered in the Atlantic, a furious gust of wind had torn a heavy rope from its fastenings and swept it across the deck, from which every landsman but one had long since disappeared. Like a serpent the long line coiled itself round the solitary idler, carrying him along in its flight; and before help could reach him, it was too late. The great billows had closed above Jack Daintry's head, hiding him and his broken heart in their gray depths until the day of resurrection shall call him forth.

And little Ena was an orphan.

A COREAN ROYAL RECEPTION.

CHOSŌN, the Land of the Morning Calm, has been for ages a closed book to European travellers and merchants, till within the last ten years, during which the hatred of the people to all foreigners has to some extent been overcome, and the country been opened up to Western civilisation. Treaty ports have been established, and the upper classes, at least, are fast learning foreign ways. The king himself is an enlightened man, and does all he can to introduce foreign customs and appliances into the country. Unlike his Chinese suzerain, he is only too glad to see the foreign representatives, and often invites them to Court festivities. A short account of one of these, held in honour of the queen's birthday, may not be uninteresting to English readers.

It was a cold afternoon in December that we started off in our official sedan-chairs, carried by eight bearers, for the palace. My chief was resplendent in silver-laced uniform and cocked-hat; for myself, not yet being the proud possessor of a uniform, I wore evening dress—rather an airy costume under the circumstances! After about half an hour's ride, we reached the outer gates of the palace, where a throng of people, in white robes and black high-crowned hats, lounged about, gazing at the foreign visitors. On all sides were official chairs, supported on long poles or covered with leopards' skins, the Corean emblem of rank. Preceded by our 'keso,' or flag-bearer, we passed through the gates, and walked through several large courtyards filled with soldiers, servants, and musicians, the last being dressed in scarlet. At some of the gates the sentries presented arms in a casual sort of way; at others, they took no notice of us at all; the discipline of the Corean army being decidedly lax, so much so that the guard at one of the inner gates was fast asleep, weighed down probably by the ponderous suit of chain-armour

which he wore. At last we reached the ante-chamber, where we were to wait till the king was ready to receive us, the representatives of each nation going into the audience chamber separately. Here were gathered some of the highest officials and nobles of the country—Presidents of Boards, Generals, and such-like 'great men'—dressed in dark green robes, high hats, and belts of wood inlaid with rhinoceros' horn—the Chinese dress of the Ming dynasty. They bowed, smiled, and shook hands most affably, setting chairs for us in an inner room, where a concourse of brilliant uniforms denoted the presence of the foreign representatives. The Japanese were especially noticeable for a superabundance of gold lace and cocked-hats out of all proportion to the size of the wearer.

After a while, a Court interpreter came bustling in to say that our turn had come and the king would see us; so, doffing our overcoats, we followed him out into the open air, across a courtyard and up some steps into a pavilion, the floor of which was covered with matting. On this our guide prostrated himself, and we bowed, although I as yet saw nothing to bow at. Crossing the pavilion, we went up into a dimly lighted hall, where I could just make out a personage—evidently the king—dressed in red robes, sitting cross-legged before a table, surrounded by a few courtiers. We advanced, and went through the necessary bowings and scrapings, standing quite close up to the table, which was covered by a foreign cloth of brilliant pattern. Our interpreter, bending forward, translated the king's words to us in a subdued tone of voice. His Majesty asked after our Queen's health, where she had been staying lately, and other questions of a like nature. Suitable answers were returned; and after I had been presented and inspected by the king, the interview ended, and we backed out of the hall as gracefully as possible on a floor covered with uneven matting. The king struck me as an intelligent-looking man, with pale face and a pleasant expression, especially when he smiled.

We were now conducted to a smaller pavilion, where the Crown Prince stood to receive us. Mentors stood on each side to prompt him, and he seemed to be a very nervous youth. He was dressed in a brown robe, and bore no resemblance to the king, his father. After a few minutes, we withdrew and went back to the anteroom, there to wait till all the audiences were over.

In about half an hour's time we put on our hats and coats and marched off in a body to an inner building in the palace, past the Examination grounds and a foreign-built clock-tower. Dinner was laid in a long room, outside which a tent of matting, raised about eight feet from the ground, had been erected. The wooden floor was covered with matting, and here the dancing was to take place after dinner. We had to wait some time till all the preparations for dinner were completed, pacing up and down to keep ourselves warm, for it was bitterly cold outside, and the wind blew through the matting most persistently. The arrangements did not seem quite complete; officials were in consultation; the *menu*—on a large roll of paper—was being drawn up by the head-cook, a stout, comfortable-

looking person, dressed in green: servants were rushing about in all directions, placing knives and forks on the table, only to take them up next moment and run away with them. The electric light, too, was refractory, and evinced a desire to flare up suddenly and then go out, leaving the assembly in total darkness. It needed the combined efforts of two or three Presidents of Boards and the head-cook to set it going satisfactorily.

Then a difficulty arose as to how we were to be seated, some of the foreign representatives being very particular on this point. At last all was settled, and we took our seats, Koreans and foreigners alternately, the President of the Foreign Office at one end of the table, and the President of the Home Office at the other. The dinner was served in foreign style, and was good, although the quantity rather exceeded the quality of the dishes. There was a succession of pigeon, duck, chicken, pheasant, bustard, not to mention roast beef, mutton, and other joints. Puddings we had of many kinds, and fruit in abundance. The dinner must have lasted an hour and a half, when the President rose and proposed the health of the Sovereigns of Foreign Powers, which was duly responded to by the toast of the health of the king of Corea.

Cigars were then handed round, and we adjourned to the afore-mentioned tent, where a bevy of dancing girls, who had previously been flattening their noses against the windows of the dining-room, awaited us, arrayed in all the colours of the rainbow. They wore baggy silk trousers gathered in at the ankles; and gowns of red, blue, and yellow, reaching to below the knee, with long sleeves, which they waved about when dancing. Their waists were placed immediately below the armpits, and there was no attempt at tight lacing. All had glossy black hair, drawn back from the forehead, with huge head-dresses of artificial hair and flowers—not unbecoming. They numbered about eighty in all, of ages ranging, apparently, from ten to thirty. At a given signal, the musicians, who were seated cross-legged on the floor at the other end of the hall, struck up a weird, barbaric chant; and a band of girls with arms outstretched advanced at a slow, measured pace, swaying the body to the time of the music and placing their little slipped feet with a swing on the ground, while they chanted a monotonous dirge, every now and then changing suddenly to a higher key. The effect was curious, and rather pleasing. The dance consisted in moving backwards and forwards, in and out, now almost touching the ground with a graceful sweep of their long sleeves, now pirouetting on their heels. Just as this rhythmic movement was beginning to grow monotonous, the castanets rattled, and the music and dancing ceased abruptly.

It would fill a book to give a description of all the different dances they went through that evening. An account of some of the more striking figures will give an idea of the whole performance. For instance, a wooden frame about eight feet high, upright on a stand, was wheeled in by the attendants. It was painted in gaudy colours, and had a round hole at the top, through which a silken ball had to be thrown. Two girls advanced from opposite sides and

began swaying about to the sound of music, every now and then making a swoop down on the ball, which lay in front of them. At length, each girl picked up her ball, and, while swaying from side to side, made feints at throwing it through the hole. Suddenly one girl made a lucky shot and pitched hers through; whereupon she knelt down, whilst an attendant damsel placed a flower in her hair in token of victory. The other, meanwhile, had also thrown, but unsuccessfully, so she received a daub of black on her cheek, and then retired crestfallen into the ranks, while her more fortunate sister received a piece of silk as a reward. Another pair now took their places before the frame, and the same performance was gone through again, till all had had their turn. The dancers then formed into two columns, the successful ones carrying their pieces of silk on one side, the unsuccessful on the other. They marched round once or twice, and then dispersed as the music stopped.

Another interesting figure was the sword-dance, performed by four girls, dressed in crimson and yellow silk, with feathered head-dresses, to represent soldiers. Eight swords were laid on the ground in a circle. The girls began, as usual, to sway about; then as the music quickened, they picked up their swords, one in each hand, and began waving them round their heads. The band played faster and faster; and the dancers twirled their swords in the most wonderful manner, never seeming to tire, although the strain on the wrists must have been tremendous. Now they began to jump about, making pretence to rush at each other, and then as quickly retreating, throwing themselves into the most extraordinary attitudes. This lasted for quite a quarter of an hour, and was the most lively performance of the evening, eliciting great applause from the onlookers. Suddenly they stopped, and, starting a low monotonous chant, marched round several times and then retired to their places. After this, men dressed up to represent gigantic storks and tigers came dancing in, imitating the movements of the creatures very cleverly. They varied their entertainment by making dashes at the girls, who tried to escape their clutches by running about in all directions, screaming and laughing. The performance closed with a grand march round of the whole corps of dancers, a high-coloured junk in the middle, in which a little girl was seated, turning slowly round on its axis, as the other girls marched round, singing as before. The whole effect was very pleasing, and formed a sight not easily to be forgotten.

By this time the clock was striking eleven, and we hurried off to our chairs, after having said good-bye to the President and other officials. A slight stoppage occurred at one of the inner gates, owing to its being locked and the key having been carried off into safe-keeping for the night. The king's permission was needed to open it, as well as to obtain the key, which was at last brought, and proved to be quite a giant of its kind, being at least a foot long, made of solid iron. It took several men to turn it in the lock and push open the great gates, through which we passed escorted by a guard of soldiers, who volunteered their services to conduct us home, in the hope of receiving some present next day. At last the

outer gates were reached, where our chairs awaited us. We hurried through the deserted streets; and so, as Mr Pepys would have said had he been there, 'home to bed, well pleased.'

THE BRONZE MEDALLION.

THE people who drop into my studio and examine the various objects of art and virtu which a long life and a considerable success in my profession have enabled me to collect together, would no doubt be very much surprised to hear that of all my treasures there is none so dear to me as the Bronze Medallion that lies enshrined within a crystal case on my mantel-piece. Many of my visitors have glanced at it, and turned away to examine a rare bit of carving, or an almost priceless example of some forgotten art. To them the bronze medallion suggested nothing; possibly they thought—if they gave the matter any thought at all—that it was some medal won in my student days, and therefore treasured with care. That it represented a whole life-history, and had the power to revive many strange memories, they had no idea. Some people, perhaps, seeing it in a place of honour amongst my knick-knacks, may have fancied that it was something for which I had the same superstitious reverence that other men give to a horse-shoe. The bronze medallion, however, is neither a fetiche nor a memento of an early artistic success; it is simply an insignificant object, worth perhaps a few shillings, which has played no small part in my life, and on one occasion saved me from a sudden and violent death.

Thirty years ago, when I was a young man of twenty-six, and had fame and fortune still eluding me, I was attached to the artistic staff of the *Illustrated Weekly*, a journal which was just then beginning a career of great success. Black and white work was not then what it is now; but people thought highly of the illustrations we were able to give them for sixpence, and there was no lack of encouragement for proprietors or artists. My own special forte was animal life, as it always has been. From the time when I could first hold a pencil, I had spent my happiest moments in drawing horses. To me a horse was a creature of infinite artistic possibilities. I had drawn him sitting in the ring of a circus and galloping at express speed over a racecourse, and it mattered little to me whether he was a high-bred or a shaggy Shetland pony. I had already begun to paint him in oils, and my first picture, 'Young Horses at Play,' was considered worthy of a place in the Academy. It was this success in depicting horses that led the editor of the *Illustrated Weekly* to suggest that I should go down to Doncaster and make a sketch of the St Leger of that year. There was some famous horse running—I forget his name for the moment—and the public interest in the race was greater than usual. Consequently, the proprietors determined to give a double-page illustration of the scene; and I travelled to Doncaster a day or two before the event, and began my work by getting an accurate idea of the racecourse, and selecting a favourable standpoint from which to focus my sketch.

which he wore. At last we reached the ante-chamber, where we were to wait till the king was ready to receive us, the representatives of each nation going into the audience chamber separately. Here were gathered some of the highest officials and nobles of the country—Presidents of Boards, Generals, and such-like 'great men'—dressed in dark green robes, high hats, and belts of wood inlaid with rhinoceros' horn—the Chinese dress of the Ming dynasty. They bowed, smiled, and shook hands most affably, setting chairs for us in an inner room, where a concourse of brilliant uniforms denoted the presence of the foreign representatives. The Japanese were especially noticeable for a superabundance of gold lace and cocked-hats out of all proportion to the size of the wearer.

After a while, a Court interpreter came bustling in to say that our turn had come and the king would see us; so, doffing our overcoats, we followed him out into the open air, across a courtyard and up some steps into a pavilion, the floor of which was covered with matting. On this our guide prostrated himself, and we bowed, although I as yet saw nothing to bow at. Crossing the pavilion, we went up into a dimly lighted hall, where I could just make out a personage—evidently the king—dressed in red robes, sitting cross-legged before a table, surrounded by a few courtiers. We advanced, and went through the necessary bowings and scrapings, standing quite close up to the table, which was covered by a foreign cloth of brilliant pattern. Our interpreter, bending forward, translated the king's words to us in a subdued tone of voice. His Majesty asked after our Queen's health, where she had been staying lately, and other questions of a like nature. Suitable answers were returned; and after I had been presented and inspected by the king, the interview ended, and we backed out of the hall as gracefully as possible on a floor covered with uneven matting. The king struck me as an intelligent-looking man, with pale face and a pleasant expression, especially when he smiled.

We were now conducted to a smaller pavilion, where the Crown Prince stood to receive us. Mentors stood on each side to prompt him, and he seemed to be a very nervous youth. He was dressed in a brown robe, and bore no resemblance to the king, his father. After a few minutes, we withdrew and went back to the anteroom, there to wait till all the audiences were over.

In about half an hour's time we put on our hats and coats and marched off in a body to an inner building in the palace, past the Examination grounds and a foreign-built clock-tower. Dinner was laid in a long room, outside which a tent of matting, raised about eight feet from the ground, had been erected. The wooden floor was covered with matting, and here the dancing was to take place after dinner. We had to wait some time till all the preparations for dinner were completed, pacing up and down to keep ourselves warm, for it was bitterly cold outside, and the wind blew through the matting most persistently. The arrangements did not seem quite complete; officials were in consultation; the *menu*—on a large roll of paper—was being drawn up by the head-cook, a stout, comfortable-

looking person, dressed in green: servants were rushing about in all directions, placing knives and forks on the table, only to take them up next moment and run away with them. The electric light, too, was refractory, and evinced a desire to flare up suddenly and then go out, leaving the assembly in total darkness. It needed the combined efforts of two or three Presidents of Boards and the head-cook to set it going satisfactorily.

Then a difficulty arose as to how we were to be seated, some of the foreign representatives being very particular on this point. At last all was settled, and we took our seats, Koreans and foreigners alternately, the President of the Foreign Office at one end of the table, and the President of the Home Office at the other. The dinner was served in foreign style, and was good, although the quantity rather exceeded the quality of the dishes. There was a succession of pigeon, duck, chicken, pheasant, bustard, not to mention roast beef, mutton, and other joints. Puddings we had of many kinds, and fruit in abundance. The dinner must have lasted an hour and a half, when the President rose and proposed the health of the Sovereigns of Foreign Powers, which was duly responded to by the toast of the health of the king of Corea.

Cigars were then handed round, and we adjourned to the afore-mentioned tent, where a bevy of dancing girls, who had previously been flattening their noses against the windows of the dining-room, awaited us, arrayed in all the colours of the rainbow. They wore baggy silk trousers gathered in at the ankles; and gowns of red, blue, and yellow, reaching to below the knee, with long sleeves, which they waved about when dancing. Their waists were placed immediately below the armpits, and there was no attempt at tight lacing. All had glossy black hair, drawn back from the forehead, with huge head-dresses of artificial hair and flowers—not unbecoming. They numbered about eighty in all, of ages ranging, apparently, from ten to thirty. At a given signal, the musicians, who were seated cross-legged on the floor at the other end of the hall, struck up a weird, barbaric chant; and a band of girls with arms outstretched advanced at a slow, measured pace, swaying the body to the time of the music and placing their little slippered feet with a swing on the ground, while they chanted a monotonous dirge, every now and then changing suddenly to a higher key. The effect was curious, and rather pleasing. The dance consisted in moving backwards and forwards, in and out, now almost touching the ground with a graceful sweep of their long sleeves, now pirouetting on their heels. Just as this rhythmic movement was beginning to grow monotonous, the castanets rattled, and the music and dancing ceased abruptly.

It would fill a book to give a description of all the different dances they went through that evening. An account of some of the more striking figures will give an idea of the whole performance. For instance, a wooden frame about eight feet high, upright on a stand, was wheeled in by the attendants. It was painted in gaudy colours, and had a round hole at the top, through which a silken ball had to be thrown. Two girls advanced from opposite sides and

began swaying about to the sound of music, every now and then making a swoop down on the ball, which lay in front of them. At length, each girl picked up her ball, and, while swaying from side to side, made feints at throwing it through the hole. Suddenly one girl made a lucky shot and pitched hers through; whereupon she knelt down, whilst an attendant damsel placed a flower in her hair in token of victory. The other, meanwhile, had also thrown, but unsuccessfully, so she received a daub of black on her cheek, and then retired crestfallen into the ranks, while her more fortunate sister received a piece of silk as a reward. Another pair now took their places before the frame, and the same performance was gone through again, till all had had their turn. The dancers then formed into two columns, the successful ones carrying their pieces of silk on one side, the unsuccessful on the other. They marched round once or twice, and then dispersed as the music stopped.

Another interesting figure was the sword-dance, performed by four girls, dressed in crimson and yellow silk, with feathered head-dresses, to represent soldiers. Eight swords were laid on the ground in a circle. The girls began, as usual, to sway about; then as the music quickened, they picked up their swords, one in each hand, and began waving them round their heads. The band played faster and faster; and the dancers twirled their swords in the most wonderful manner, never seeming to tire, although the strain on the wrists must have been tremendous. Now they began to jump about, making pretence to rush at each other, and then as quickly retreating, throwing themselves into the most extraordinary attitudes. This lasted for quite a quarter of an hour, and was the most lively performance of the evening, eliciting great applause from the onlookers. Suddenly they stopped, and, starting a low monotonous chant, marched round several times and then retired to their places. After this, men dressed up to represent gigantic storks and tigers came dancing in, imitating the movements of the creatures very cleverly. They varied their entertainment by making dashes at the girls, who tried to escape their clutches by running about in all directions, screaming and laughing. The performance closed with a grand march round of the whole corps of dancers, a high-coloured junk in the middle, in which a little girl was seated, turning slowly round on its axis, as the other girls marched round, singing as before. The whole effect was very pleasing, and formed a sight not easily to be forgotten.

By this time the clock was striking eleven, and we hurried off to our chairs, after having said good-bye to the President and other officials. A slight stoppage occurred at one of the inner gates, owing to its being locked and the key having been carried off into safe-keeping for the night. The king's permission was needed to open it, as well as to obtain the key, which was at last brought, and proved to be quite a giant of its kind, being at least a foot long, made of solid iron. It took several men to turn it in the lock and push open the great gates, through which we passed escorted by a guard of soldiers, who volunteered their services to conduct us home, in the hope of receiving some present next day. At last the

outer gates were reached, where our chairs awaited us. We hurried through the deserted streets; and so, as Mr Pepys would have said had he been there, 'home to bed, well pleased.'

THE BRONZE MEDALLION.

THE people who drop into my studio and examine the various objects of art and virtu which a long life and a considerable success in my profession have enabled me to collect together, would no doubt be very much surprised to hear that of all my treasures there is none so dear to me as the Bronze Medallion that lies enshrined within a crystal case on my mantel-piece. Many of my visitors have glanced at it, and turned away to examine a rare bit of carving, or an almost priceless example of some forgotten art. To them the bronze medallion suggested nothing; possibly they thought—if they gave the matter any thought at all—that it was some medal won in my student days, and therefore treasured with care. That it represented a whole life-history, and had the power to revive many strange memories, they had no idea. Some people, perhaps, seeing it in a place of honour amongst my knick-knacks, may have fancied that it was something for which I had the same superstitious reverence that other men give to a horse-shoe. The bronze medallion, however, is neither a fetiche nor a memento of an early artistic success; it is simply an insignificant object, worth perhaps a few shillings, which has played no small part in my life, and on one occasion saved me from a sudden and violent death.

Thirty years ago, when I was a young man of twenty-six, and had fame and fortune still eluding me, I was attached to the artistic staff of the *Illustrated Weekly*, a journal which was just then beginning a career of great success. Black and white work was not then what it is now; but people thought highly of the illustrations we were able to give them for sixpence, and there was no lack of encouragement for proprietors or artists. My own special forte was animal life, as it always has been. From the time when I could first hold a pencil, I had spent my happiest moments in drawing horses. To me a horse was a creature of infinite artistic possibilities. I had drawn him sitting in the ring of a circus and galloping at express speed over a racecourse, and it mattered little to me whether he was a high-bred or a shaggy Shetland pony. I had already begun to paint him in oils, and my first picture, 'Young Horses at Play,' was considered worthy of a place in the Academy. It was this success in depicting horses that led the editor of the *Illustrated Weekly* to suggest that I should go down to Doncaster and make a sketch of the St Leger of that year. There was some famous horse running—I forget his name for the moment—and the public interest in the race was greater than usual. Consequently, the proprietors determined to give a double-page illustration of the scene; and I travelled to Doncaster a day or two before the event, and began my work by getting an accurate idea of the racecourse, and selecting a favourable standpoint from which to focus my sketch.

The day of the great race came, and during the morning I was busily occupied in interviewing the various horses engaged, and in filling my sketch-book with bits that seemed likely to be useful. When the afternoon came round and the racing began, I made my way to a certain part of the course which had seemed to me very well suited to my purposes, and there I took up my stand. There were two races to be run before the St Leger; and while these were being got through, and during the intervals between them, I occupied myself in watching the doings of the crowd which filled the upper part of the town moor. There must have been two hundred thousand people present on the stands and in the rings and on the moor, and from them came a perfect babel of sound, above which the stentorian voices of the bookmakers blended with the shrill cries of catchpenny adventurers of all sorts. Here two or three members of the three-card-trick fraternity were endeavouring to gull a group of round-faced rustics; there, a similar gang were shouting the praises of a sort of roulette table; yonder, a betting-man had screamed himself hoarse, and was reduced to shaking the money in his bag as a means of attracting attention. Beyond the shouting, swaying, bustling crowd stretched a long line of vehicles of all descriptions, from the lordly-looking coach to the farmer's light cart, and on these men and women were eating and drinking and discussing the prospects of the favourite for the great race. Across the course rose the long line of stands, thickly packed with fashionable race-goers, and these made a dark background to the picture I had in my mind's eye.

I was noticing all these things, and taking a sly sketch now and then of some face or figure that attracted my attention, when I caught sight of a little gentleman, evidently a Frenchman, who seemed very much out of place amongst the rough crowd. He was very neatly dressed from top to toe; but as he passed me I noticed that his black frock coat was somewhat shiny at the shoulders, and that his carefully brushed hat had certainly seen better days. He went in and out amongst the crowd, staring at the book-makers, and glancing curiously at the three-card fraternity. I thought there was something wistful about his eyes as he looked at the gold which these gentry displayed so lavishly. Presently I lost sight of him in the crowd; but about ten minutes before the St Leger was to be run, I saw him again. He was engaged in confidential conversation with an individual whom I set down at once as a betting-man's tout, and against whose wiles and blandishments I should have liked to warn the evidently innocent foreigner. Presently, however, there was a great cry of 'They're off!' and I had to turn my attention to the race.

However great the excitement, and however long it may have existed prior to the event which rouses it, it takes but a few very brief moments to allay it for ever. Within four minutes of the cry of 'They're off!' the horses had flashed past me and past the winning-post, and the great race was over. I strolled round the crowd and amused myself by watching the faces of the people who had lost their money, and the joyful

manifestations of those who had betted successfully. I passed beyond the line of carriages and carts, and walked across the moor to the slight hill at the bottom of the course, from whence there is an excellent view of the crowds gathered before the stands. There were very few people about the hill or the furze-bushes which cover it, and things were quiet there after the roar and bustle of the crowd. I turned away to the left, intending to go into the high-road and walk back to the town; but I suddenly paused and hesitated, for there, close before me, was the little French gentleman, evidently in distress. He sat on the ground behind one of the furze-bushes with his hands hanging helplessly over his drawn-up knees, and his head drooping forward in abject fashion. It was evident that he had fallen amongst thieves. I went up to him and spoke, feeling that his distress warranted me in doing so.

'I am afraid you are in trouble, sir,' I said.

He lifted his face from his hands and looked up. 'Ah, m'sieur!' He spread his little fat hands abroad with a gesture that was half pathetic, half comical. 'Hélas, I have been robbed—swindled—I have lost all my moneys.'

'Do you mean that some one has picked your pocket?' I asked. 'If so, you should inform the police.'

'Ah, but it is not zat zey have peek my pocket!' he answered quickly. 'It is zat I am one big fool—I bet—I stake—I gives my money to ze maker of books, and—pho! it is gone.'

'Ah, you have been betting.'

'Hélas, m'sieur, yes. You see, I am—ah, but!—I am poor. I am Professor of Languages at sixty pounds a year. It is ver' leetle for Madame my spouse, and for Jules and myself, and I often zink of how I can make heem more. A yong man say to me, "You should bet," "You should put your money on ze horses." He talk to me, zis yong man, of tens to one, and seex to one, and I listen. Zen yesterday comes, and zey pay ze salary at my school. Zey pay me five pound, and I put heem in my pocket and say, "To-morrow I will go to see ze horses-race and win much money." So I arrive here at ze course, m'sieur, and I walks round and see the makers of books, and I talk with a gentleman of sport who knows what he calls "a sure teep," and he tells me to put my five pound on "Crocodile," and takes me to a man who gives me a tecket, and lays me seexy to one against ze horse "Crocodile." Zen I say zat "Crocodile" will win me three hundred pound; and we will be happy, and my leetle Jules shall have a new coat, and Madame my spouse will buy herself a new gown, and I shall have great joy. And zen they run, the horses; and when zey have finish I go to my maker of books and request my money. And he say "Crocodile" is nowhere at all, and my five pound is lost; and ze man zat gave me ze "sure teep" is gone, and—hélas, m'sieur, now I have no salary to take home!'

And here the little man broke down and wept. Half-amused as I was at his story, I felt sorry for him, for I could well imagine that the loss of his five pounds would mean a good deal to him and to Madame his spouse and their boy Jules. When he had recovered himself a little, I talked further with him, and found that he was

a political refugee, and that he taught French in a boys' school at Doncaster. Convinced that his tale was genuine, I determined to help him. I had a five-pound note in my pocket for which I had no immediate need, and I made up my mind that he should have it. As I did not desire to pose as a benefactor, however, I resolved to adopt a little ruse.

'Well, sir,' said I, 'these fellows have swindled you, of course. To begin with, you should not have talked to the man who professed to know of a sure tip. All he wanted was your money'—

'Hélas, m'sieur, I am great fool—yes,' he interrupted, smiting his forehead. 'I have a head of wood. But it was the desire to carry home much money to my spouse and to cry, "Behold a fortune!"'

'And have you really nothing to go on with, sir?' I inquired.

He blushed and hung his head. 'Ah, m'sieur,' he said, 'not one centime. It is hard work to live on ze five pound a month. And now I have gamble heem away, my beautiful five-pound note, and zere will be no money for ze baker and ze butcher; and Madame my spouse will weep, and— Ah, wretched traitor zat I am!'

'Come, come, sir,' said I; 'don't give way. Here, you stay there awhile, and I'll go and see if I can't recover your money. Which of the betting-men was it that you gave your note to?'

'The gentleman called "Old Toby from London," m'sieur. He zat stands near the refreshments with a wonderful hat upon his head, and a long white coat.'

'Well, stay there,' said I, 'and I will see "Old Toby," and try to get your money; and away I went back to the crowd. But I had no intention of going near "Old Toby from London;" and after I had taken a turn through the people, I returned to the furze-bushes with my own five-pound note in my hand. I held it out to the little Frenchman, who received it with extravagant expressions of relief and delight.

'There's your five pounds, sir,' I said; 'and I hope you'll never be tempted to bet again.'

'Ah, m'sieur, indeed, no! I promise you on my sacred word, and I beseech you to accept my'— Here he broke off and looked fixedly from me to the note, which he had smoothed out. He turned pale, then red, then pale again.

'What's the matter, sir?' said I. 'Isn't that right?'

'M'sieur!' He drew his little figure to its full height. 'Zis is not my note. See, I take ze numbaire of heem—it is 200317. And see, ze numbaire of zis note is 521683. Ah—ah—m'sieur, I see how it is! Your generous heart weeps for my poor leetle Jules and for Madame my spouse, and you give me zis money out of your own pocket. Ah, beautiful sympathy—it makes me weep.' And he began to shed more tears. I turned to go, feeling somewhat confused. 'Good-day, sir,' I said.

The little Frenchman seized my hand. 'I zank you, m'sieur,' he said simply; 'I zank you from my heart.'

'You are very welcome,' said I, and hastened to leave him.

Before I had proceeded many yards, he ran after me. 'M'sieur,' said he, 'take zis leetle

object as a memento. You will zink of Hector Malan and his gratitude when you see it. It is nothing—a leetle medal zat my son Jules win at ze school, m'sieur. I zank you again, and I pray ze good God to reward you.'

I took the little bronze medallion which he put into my hand, and went on my way again. That night on my way to town I looked at the memento of my somewhat amusing adventure; it was a bronze medal rather larger than a crown piece. One side bore a figure of Learning bestowing a laurel wreath on a kneeling child; the other informed me that the medal had been presented to Master Jules Malan for his proficiency in mathematics. I put the little token in my purse and thought no more of it until some weeks later, when I happened to be dining with a fellow-artist at a restaurant, and once more came across it amidst a handful of loose change. I handed it over to my friend, and told him the story as we walked away together.

'If that medal were mine,' said he, 'I should attach a sort of superstitious reverence to it. I should look on it as a species of lucky-penny, and always carry it about my person.'

I laughed at the idea; but I put the bronze medallion back into my purse, and there it stayed. I attached no sort of value to it; but it seemed somehow to become a fixture, and had an inner compartment of my purse all to itself.

Some years went by. I worked hard at my profession, and began to be known as a painter of animal life, and especially of horses. A battle-scene of mine, 'Horses in War,' brought me an invitation from my old friends the proprietors of the *Illustrated Weekly* to go out as war-artist during the Franco-Prussian campaign. I was disposed to go before the invitation reached me. I was unmarried; I had no ties; and there seemed no reason why I should not see something of war at first hand. Accordingly, I accepted the invitation; and within a week I was with the Prussian forces near Saarbruck. I am not writing the history of that famous campaign, and I shall therefore pass over the preliminary events of the war, and go on to the time when the Prussians, having easily recovered from their first reverses, poured over Alsace and Lorraine and began to besiege Strasburg and Metz. I, in company with several other English war correspondents and artists, was with the advance corps of the attacking army, and had considerable difficulty in getting on at all. The Prussian military authorities had small love for special correspondents, and we were indebted solely to ourselves for whatever information we got. To me this official stand-offishness did not so much matter as to my companions, the special correspondents. My business was to make pictures, theirs to find news. Nevertheless, I found it hard work sometimes to get materials for my sketches; and the risks I occasionally ran were greater than those which I should have incurred had I mixed in the thick of the skirmishes, which went on continually.

It was a cold, damp afternoon in October, and we were lying half-way betwixt Bonzonville and Gravelotte, about nine miles from Metz. The Prussians were slowly advancing upon that city, and the air was continually disturbed by the

vibrations of their cannon. A regiment near which I had remained all day was engaged in skirmishing operations with a French battalion, and from the top of a slight eminence I was endeavouring to make an effective sketch of the scene. Suddenly a white fog rolled over the valley and wrapped both bodies of combatants in its thick folds. I endeavoured to regain my quarters; but the fog increased in density, and I soon found it impossible to make headway against it. For some time I remained motionless. The noise of cannon and musketry died away, and I heard the bugles sounding a retreat on both sides. Then I determined to go slowly back to my quarters near the village of Bonzonville. Unfortunately, I found it impossible to decide which was east and which west. I had been stationed on a round knoll or eminence, and I had walked about its crown so many times during my observations, that I was now unable to decide on the exact spot at which I had ascended it. At last, however, I came to a tree of which I seemed to have some recollection, and I descended the hill and walked, as I thought, towards Bonzonville.

By that time the plain was quiet, and I heard nothing save an occasional far-off bugle note. I walked on for an hour through the thick white fog, seeking for some familiar landmark. None came. I began to realise that I was lost. I stood and wondered what to do. Then I went forward again. A church clock struck the hour, six, close by. Clearly, I was near a village. I came to a road, and hastened along it, and presently fell into the hands of a French picket. I had walked west instead of east. I was at Gravelotte.

The picket marched me into the village, and led me before their colonel, a fierce-looking militaire, who glared at me from behind a table at which he was evidently writing despatches. 'What's this?' said he. 'A spy?'

Now, unfortunately for me, I cannot speak French, but my knowledge of German is extensive. I replied to the colonel's question in English. He shook his head. I then spoke in German, and his face grew dark. A soldier interpreted my answer.

'So!' said the colonel. 'A pretty story, indeed! He speaks German like a native, and professes to be an Englishman. Everybody knows that an Englishman can speak no other language than his own. An English artist, eh? See what papers he has.'

I drew all my papers from my breast-pocket voluntarily and handed them over. As ill-luck would have it, I had that morning made a plan of the surrounding country in my sketch-book. The French colonel looked at this narrowly, and nodded his head. 'As I thought,' said he. 'What is this but a map? Come, Mr Spy, what have you to say?'

'Tell the colonel,' said I to the interpreter, 'that I am no spy, but the special war correspondent of a great English newspaper, and that what I said before is true. These are my credentials—bid him look at them.'

The colonel tossed the papers aside contemptuously. 'What of them?' said he. 'They may have been stolen, forged—how do I know? He speaks German—he looks like a German—

he has maps, charts, drawings on him—*enfin*, he is a spy. Take him out and shoot him.'

A corporal tapped me on the shoulder and motioned me towards the door. I was so surprised at the colonel's last words that I stood motionless; but when I realised their full meaning I suddenly found tongue, and rated the whole group in forcible English. The colonel shrugged his shoulders, and repeated his commands, and the file of soldiers began to hustle me out. Before we reached the door, however, he stopped us. 'Spy,' said he, 'we will give you a chance. Tell us all you know of the Prussian movements, and we will consider your case.'

'I shall do no such thing,' said I. 'I am an English gentleman, and I will not do dirty work for either French or Prussian.'

'Take time,' said he. 'Think it over.—*Caporal*, call in a *sous-lieutenant* and two men.'

A young officer and two privates entered the room of the farmhouse in which we were standing and saluted.

'You see this man,' said the old colonel, pointing to me. 'Keep him safe till daybreak; then bring him to me.' He turned to me again: 'Think over my offer, Mr Spy. If you accept it, well; if you don't, you will be shot in the morning.'

The young officer and the two men marched me out into the fog again and took me to a cottage close by. I was placed in a room where a fire burnt on the hearth, and an oil-lamp shed some little light on a plain deal table. My guardians signed to me to sit down; and then one of the soldiers, after a whispered colloquy with the lieutenant, left the cottage, and presently returned with food and drink, which he set before me. Desperately placed as I was, I ate my supper; and when I had finished, filled and lighted my pipe. I thought things over, and could see no chance of escape.

'Monsieur,' said I, addressing the young officer who sat near me on the hearth, 'I shall certainly have to die to-morrow morning, if your colonel persists in his foolish conduct, and I should like to write a last letter to my friends. Will you have the goodness to provide me with writing materials?'

The lad responded in the affirmative, and bade one of his men fetch pen, ink, and paper. While he was gone, the young officer—who was certainly not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, and had a frank, open face—looked at me curiously, and presently inquired if I was really an Englishman. He spoke English so well that I was surprised.

'Certainly I am,' I answered. 'And anybody but your colonel would have recognised as much. I am an Englishman, and what I represented myself to be when questioned.'

'I am sorry for you, sir,' said he. 'I wish I could help you.'

'Then promise to forward this packet for me,' said I. 'You can show it to your colonel if you like.'

He replied that he would do his best to oblige me; and I set to work at my letter. I wrote out a full account of my afternoon's adventures, and addressed it to the proprietors of my journal. Then I took off my watch and chain and rings

and laid them on the letter, intending to wrap them all up together. I had another ring in my purse, and I drew the latter from my pocket and opened it. As I did so, the bronze medallion escaped and fell from the table to the floor. The young officer stooped, and picking it up, laid it by my hand. The light from the lamp shone full on the inscription. He uttered an exclamation, and picked the medallion up again. I looked at him in astonishment. His face was flushed and eager; he stared at me with wide-open eyes.

'Monsieur!' he gasped—'monsieur! For the love of Heaven, tell me—this medal, where did you get it?'

'The medal?' I said. 'Oh, I got it some years ago in England.'

'But where?' he said. 'Where, monsieur? Ah, do not trifle with me—tell me where. For, see you, monsieur, I am Jules Malan!'

I looked at him wonderingly. This, then, was the Jules over whom the little Frenchman had waxed so eloquent on the racecourse at Doncaster.

'So you are Jules!' I said. 'Then you are the son of the man who gave me that medal?'

'And you are my father's benefactor,' he cried. 'It was you of whom he told us that day when he came home from the race.'

'Well, this is strange!' said I. 'But come, tell me something about your father. Is he back in his native France? Is he well? I have often thought of him.'

'Alas, sir, my dear father is dead, and my mother also. But let me tell you—we prospered in England, for my father had money left soon after your meeting with him, and he secured a free pardon for his political offences, and we returned to Paris. We were very happy, monsieur, until last year, and then my parents died. They never saw me in my uniform,' he added with a sad smile, as he turned the bronze medallion over and over in his fingers. 'Ah, monsieur, how well I remember winning this at the school in your foggy England! My father used often to talk of you and wonder if you preserved his memento. "See, thou, Jules," he would say, "if ever thou shouldst meet my benefactor and canst serve him, do it for my sake." And now I have met you, monsieur, and I would help you—and I cannot.'

'Never mind,' said I; 'perhaps your colonel will see reason in the morning.'

He shook his head at that, and relapsed into silence. For a long time no one spoke. The two soldiers nodded on the long settle; but Jules and I were wide awake. He kept looking wistfully at me: I for my part found it impossible to sleep. Somehow, I could not think the fierce old colonel meant to shoot me, but the mere idea was bad enough to howl over.

Morning came—gray, cold, cheerless. As the bugles sounded outside Jules and his men marched me into the colonel's presence. The old militaire was as stern and unbending as on the night before. He eyed me keenly.

'Well, Mr Spy,' said he, 'do you accept my offer of last night?'

My heart began to thump violently. 'No, sir,' I answered.

'Then you will be shot at once. Lieutenant'—

But Jules suddenly interrupted him. 'No, no, no, my colonel!' he cried, throwing his arms about me. 'No—no—it is my father's benefactor. Behold!'

He held up the bronze medallion. The colonel stared at us as if we had gone mad. 'What's this?' said he. 'Speak, Jules—here is some mystery.'

Jules told the story as only a Frenchman could tell it. When he finished, the old militaire shook my hand, embraced me, and bade me go my way. 'We are not ungrateful, we French,' said he naively.

I said farewell to him and to Jules, and within an hour regained my quarters at Bonzonville.

Well, that is a long time ago, and since then I have often called on Jules Malan and his pretty wife in Paris. We are great friends—for there is a tie between us which nothing can ever break. I shall never forget it, nor will those of my friends who know the history of my carefully treasured bronze medallion.

EXPERTS IN HANDWRITING.

At the trial of the now partially forgotten miscreant Neill, the blackmailing letters which led to the detection of his crimes were easily identified as his, owing to the handwriting being very peculiar. It might easily have happened, however, as in so many previous cases, that the evidence of an expert would have been required to identify the writer. Such testimony is very frequently given, and is so much a matter of course when any doubt attaches to the authorship of letters, that it is hard to believe that it was ever regarded as inadmissible. Yet such is the case. The reform of legal procedure has gone ahead greatly during the last half-century, and many antiquated and absurd restrictions have been swept away, that with regard to expert evidence among them. It was formerly held that to allow opinions to be expressed as to the authorship of writings would complicate the issues, open the door for invidious selection, and raise points on which an unlettered jury would be incompetent to pronounce. In the Fitzwalter Peerage case, for instance, which was tried in 1843, the evidence of the inspector of franks at the General Post-office was rejected, on the ground that his knowledge of the disputed writings could not have been acquired by acquaintance with the writers, the signatures in question occurring in a family pedigree made in 1751. A similar point was raised before a full bench of the Court of Common Pleas in 1852, and decided in the same sense. It was not until 1854 that a remedy was provided for this very inconvenient state of affairs by a clause in the Criminal Law Procedure Act of that year which permits the judge, if he sees fit, to admit the evidence of experts.

That the innovation was necessary is proved by the fact that the permission has been largely used ever since, and has proved of great service, particularly in cases of forgery. To mention only leading instances: the evidence of experts greatly furthered the ends of justice in the Roupell case,

the famous Tichborne trial, and the Whalley will case of more recent years. This class of testimony is also frequent in County Court actions, where the morals of many of the suitors permit them to have recourse to the most objectionable expedients to gain the day. It is true that specialists in handwriting, like those who devote themselves to medical and scientific subjects, do not always agree, and this renders it necessary to accept their evidence with caution; but the advantage of having points of difference and similarity, which would often escape the notice of the average man, brought clearly to light, is obvious and important. On this point the opinion of the late Lord Chief-justice Cockburn, who tried an unusual number of cases in which expert evidence was introduced, may fitly be quoted. 'The evidence of professional witnesses,' he said on one occasion, 'is to be viewed with some degree of mistrust, for it is generally given with some bias. But within proper limits, it is a very valuable assistance in inquiries of this kind. The advantage is that habits of handwriting as shown in minute points which escape common observation, but are quite observable when pointed out, are detected and disclosed by science, skill, and experience.'

Giving evidence in court is, however, only a comparatively small part of the business of a handwriting expert. His main occupation is advising private persons, especially those who have received anonymous communications. Threatening letters to Irish landlords and others, slanderous post-cards, mysterious epistles signed 'A True Friend'—in fact, all the missives which cowardly, venomous, and illiterate people of a certain class are fond of inditing, bring grist to the expert's mill. The recipient generally has some suspicion as to the origin of these documents, and wishes to have his suspicion either confirmed or set at rest. Valentines, too, furnish a good deal of work, even in these days when they are less popular than they were. During the later part of February there is a plentiful crop of inquiries respecting communications received on the 14th of that month. It may seem strange that any one should spend time and money in ascertaining the source of such banalities, but the undoubted fact that they do is only another illustration of the power of curiosity and the feeling of injured dignity. Besides such applications as we have mentioned, there are many others. Disappointed legatees are apt to have doubts as to the authenticity of a will which has ignored them; holders of dishonoured bills desire to verify the signatures of acceptors or endorsers; and autograph hunters are often anxious as to the genuineness of some illegible scrawl reputed to be that of a man of note. In various ways, therefore, the small class of experts—there are said to be only two in the whole of London—find a good deal of employment.

Regarding the methods made use of to determine authorship, specialists are naturally reticent. Some of them have admitted, however, the nature of the leading principles which guide them. The philosophy of the matter rests mainly on the fact that it is very rare for any two persons to write hands similar enough to deceive a careful observer, unless one is imitating the other. 'Fists,' like faces, have all some special idiosyncrasy, and the

imitator has not merely to copy that of some one else, but to disguise his own. By careful and frequent practice he may succeed well enough to deceive the ordinary man, but is rarely successful in baffling the expert. Even the most skilful culprit cannot wholly hide his individuality, as he is sure to relapse into his ordinary method occasionally. Then, again, great care has to be used, and this can be detected, by the traces of hesitancy, the substitution of curves for angles, and *vice versâ*, which come out very plainly when the writing is examined under the microscope, as it usually is by the expert. A plan of detection which has been adopted with great success is to cut out each letter in a doubtful piece of writing, and paste all the As, Bs, &c., on separate sheets of paper. The process is also gone through with a genuine bit of caligraphy of the imitator or the imitated, as the case may be. Comparison almost invariably shows that the letters are less uniform if imitation has been attempted, the writer being occasionally betrayed into some approach to his ordinary caligraphy, or into momentary forgetfulness of some special point in the handwriting he is simulating. No point is too small to escape an expert's attention. The dotting of *is*, the crossing of *ts*, the curls and flourishes, the intervals between the words, the thinness of the up-stroke, and the thickness of the down-stroke, are all noted and carefully compared. Where only a signature has been forged, and that by means of tracings from the original, the resemblance is often so exact as to deceive even the supposed author, but in these cases the microscope is generally effective in determining not merely the forgery but the method by which it was accomplished. It is some comfort to know that the cunning of the forger is overmatched by the scientific skill of the trained expert.

VISITANTS.

By ARTHUR L. SALMON.

THEY come to me at dawn of day
With whisperings of long ago,
And haunt me in the twilight gray.

With notes of a forgotten lay,
That once so well I used to know,
They come to me at dawn of day;

And when in dusky aisles I pray,
They come on wings of music low,
And haunt me in the twilight gray.

In scented blossoms of the May,
In winds that through my lattice blow,
They come to me at dawn of day.

They come from regions far away,
On summer showers or flakes of snow,
And haunt me in the twilight gray.

Through everything I do or say,
Some tokens of their presence flow;
They come to me at dawn of day,
And haunt me in the twilight gray.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON; and EDINBURGH.